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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

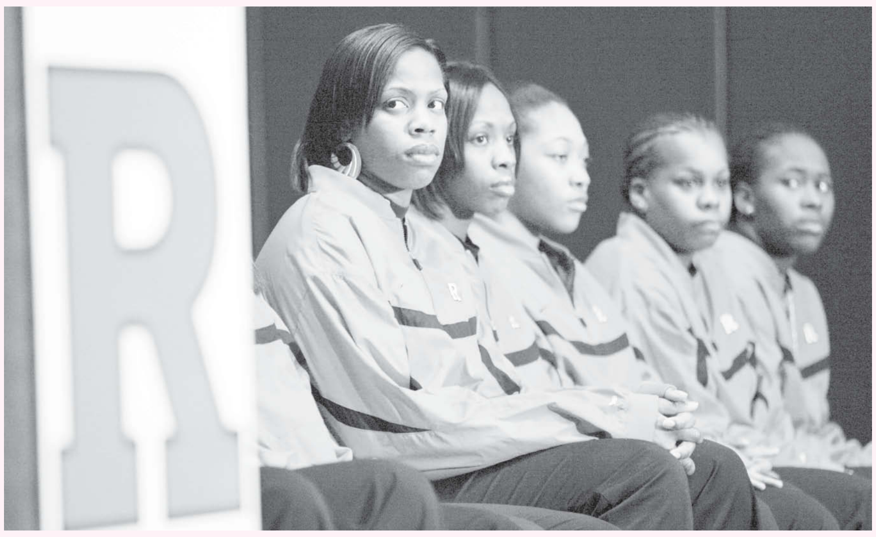
VOL. 71/NO. 16 APRIL 23, 2007

INSIDE

Washington's smear campaign against Cuban libraries falls flat

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Demands grow louder that radio host be fired over racist, sexist remark



Reuters/Mike Segar

NEW BRUNSWICK, New Jersey, April 11—Rutgers University women's basketball team members at a news conference yesterday in nearby Piscataway condemned racist remarks by radio talk-show host Don Imus. Team coach Vivian Stringer said Imus made "racist and sexist remarks that are deplorable, despicable, and unconscionable." While on the air April 4, Imus called members of the team, most of whom are Black, "nappy-headed ho's." His morning talk show was then suspended for two weeks by CBS Radio and MSNBC, which televises it, and Imus has apologized publicly. But many at rallies here and in New York the last two days demanded that he be fired. As we go to press, MSNBC TV announced it would no longer simulcast the "Imus in the Morning" radio program.

—EDDIE BECK

'Legalization now!'

15,000 march in Los Angeles; Reject bosses' 'immigration reform'



Militant/Dean Hazlewood

April 7 march in Los Angeles to demand legalization for undocumented immigrants. Some 15,000 immigrant workers and their supporters participated in the action.

BY MICHAEL ORTEGA AND ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

LOS ANGELES, April 7—Some 15,000 people marched to City Hall here today, chanting, "What do we want? Legalization! When do we want it? Now!" Wearing red T-shirts, protesters carried signs demanding amnesty for the undocumented, an end to immigration raids and deportations, and legalization of all immigrants without papers, estimated at 12 million in the United States today.

The event was sponsored by the April 7 Coalition for Full Rights of Undocumented Workers. Its members include Latino Movement USA, Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, and A.N.S.W.E.R. coalition.

Many protesters expressed opposition to immigration bills promoted by capitalist politicians. "What we need is real legalization," said Ricky Juárez, a young warehouse worker, who, along with his brother Eduardo, carried homemade signs reading, "Unity" and "Stop the raids."

"Thousands of dollars in fees, just to get started, is a way to block legalization," said Juárez. "It's going to be a struggle

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Thousands in Iraq protest U.S. occupation

U.S. troops battle local Mahdi militia

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, April 9—Thousands of Iraqis marched in Najaf today to demand that U.S. troops leave the country. The rally, organized by supporters of Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, marked the fourth anniversary of the fall of Baghdad after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

According to Al-Jazeera TV, marchers carried banners that read: "Down with

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'La migra' raids pork plant in Illinois; 60 workers in jail

BY ILONA GERSH

CHICAGO, April 5—At 1:30 a.m. yesterday Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided the Cargill Meat Solutions pork plant in Beardstown, Illinois.

The immigration cops arrested 60 sanitation workers employed by Quality Service Integrity (QSI), a cleaning company contracted by Cargill, and two QSI bosses. The sanitation agency

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Protests in N.Y., L.A.: 'Free Cuban 5!'

BY RÓGER CALERO

NEW YORK, April 7—Chants of "Free the Cuban Five!" and "Hey, hey! Ho, ho! U.S. out of Guantánamo!" reverberated in midtown Manhattan this afternoon as 200 people marched from Bryant Park to Central Park. Protesters demanded an end to Washington's economic war on Cuba and threats against Venezuela and Bolivia, as well as freedom for five Cuban revolutionaries framed up on espionage and other charges and imprisoned in the United States.

The marchers also called for an end to U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico, and freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoners held in U.S. prisons for advocating their country's independence.

The same day about 50 people held a rally in Los Angeles with the same

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International women's conference opens in Caracas

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON AND MAURA DELUCA

CARACAS, Venezuela, April 10—The opening event of the 14th Congress of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) here was a young women's conference. The April 8 activity brought together more than 500 women from dozens of countries.

Half of the delegates came from Venezuela, many of them active in government-sponsored programs to make education, medical care, and other social services more accessible to working people. Others came from youth and women's organizations in countries around the world. These include El Salvador, Mexico, Lebanon, Bolivia, India, Brazil, Greece, Germany, Cuba,

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Hundreds rally in Indiana in solidarity with miners' strike

BY LAURA ANDERSON AND ROLLANDE GIRARD

PRINCETON, Indiana, April 5—Nearly 500 striking coal miners and their supporters rallied here today in bitter cold winds to support the 230 members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1791 on strike at the Wabash mine in Keensburg, Illinois. The mine is owned by Foundation Coal Holdings, Inc.

The UMWA contract at the mine expired March 31. Workers did not agree to the bosses' demand to cut wages—in violation of the national coal contract the union has signed with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA)—and walked out April 4. Miners at two underground Foundation mines in Pennsylvania

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Over 400 sign up in first week of 'Militant' subscription drive

BY RÓGER CALERO

April 11—More than 400 people subscribed to the *Militant* the first week of the paper's spring circulation drive. Workers, students, and others signed up at factory gates, on the job, in workers districts, immigrant rights rallies, and activities demanding an end to Washington's economic and political war on Cuba.

This puts the international effort to win 2,400 new subscribers by the end of May ahead of schedule.

Supporters of the *Militant* from Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco took part in the 15,000-strong march in Los Angeles last Saturday demanding legalization of immigrants (see article above). They signed up 17 subscribers

Continued on page 4

Also Inside:

Washington's 'war on terror' undermines ally in Pakistan

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

After eight years of military rule, Pakistani president Gen. Pervez Musharraf's grip on power is weakening.

The U.S.-led imperialist occupation of Afghanistan and increased pressure by Washington on Pakistan's rulers to take stronger action against Taliban militias operating within Pakistan, near its border with Afghanistan, is at the root of the crisis.

The Taliban ruled Afghanistan until 2001, when their regime was toppled by the U.S.-led force that invaded the country.

At the end of February, U.S. vice president Richard Cheney made an unannounced visit to Pakistan to warn Musharraf that military aid to his government could be cut off if Islamabad did not do more to stop al-Qaeda and Taliban forces from operating in western Pakistan.

In January the U.S. House of Representatives passed such a bill, as did the Senate in mid-March. The latter included an amendment by Democratic senators John Kerry, Joseph Biden, and Christopher Dodd specifically linking U.S. military assistance to Pakistan to "demonstrable progress" by Islamabad in preventing Taliban and al-Qaeda forces from using Pakistani territory.

Over the past five years, Washington's military aid to Pakistan has skyrocketed. In the three years after the invasion of Afghanistan, it rose to $4.2 billion, compared to $9.1 million for the three previous years—a 45,000 percent increase, reported the Center for Public Integrity. Since 2001, the Pentagon has also had use of air bases in Pakistan.

"Pakistan and Afghanistan should be a single theater of operations as Taliban enjoy privileged sanctuaries in the tribal areas on the Pakistani side of a mythical frontier," wrote Arnaud de Borchgrave, editor at large of the *Washington Times,* in a March 17 opinion column. "But NATO and U.S. troops cannot chase Taliban fighters back into Pakistan without triggering a chain reaction that could easily lead to the fall of President Pervez Musharraf."

Washington is increasingly concerned about what commentators in the big-business media have described as the "Talibanization of Pakistan." On March 23, Strategic Forecasting (Stratfor), a U.S. private intelligence agency, said "Pakistan needs to figure out how it can continue to use the Afghan Taliban as an instrument in gaining influence in Kabul without Talibanizing its own territory."

Among the Pashtuns, who live on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border, Stratfor said, "the Taliban is the most powerful movement." However, its report concluded, "Pakistan's efforts to block Taliban activity in its territory while it seeks to use the Pashtun jihadist movement to gain a foothold in Afghanistan are not going to work."

The Musharraf government has been signing "peace pacts" with leaders in the semiautonomous tribal regions near the Afghan border to "fight terrorism." The latest accord was signed March 26 with officials from the Bajur region. Summarizing the pact, Malik Abdul Aziz, head of Bajur's tribal council, told the Associated Press that "local Taliban" living in the region "have assured us that they will not shelter foreign militants in their areas." Similar accords were signed with local officials in north and south Wazirstan in 2005 and 2006.

Meanwhile, growing discontent among middle-class layers with the Musharraf regime has led lawyers to conduct street protests and boycott some court proceedings over the March 9 dismissal of Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry. Musharraf suspended the head of Pakistan's Supreme Court, charging him with "abuse of power." Chaudhry was beginning to question the disappearance of hundreds of people in Pakistan at the hands of government agents, reported the *Christian Science Monitor.* He also "had expressed his view that it was not legal under the constitution for Musharraf to seek another presidential term while remaining the Army chief," the *Monitor* said.

'Free four Puerto Rican political prisoners!'



Militant/Dan Fein

BRONX, New York, March 31—Around 40 people marched here today to demand freedom for the four Puerto Rican political prisoners—Oscar López Rivera, Carlos Alberto Torres, Haydée Beltran, and José Pérez—held in U.S. prisons for their activities in support of Puerto Rico's independence. The action, the first of others to follow in April, was sponsored by the Pro-Libertad Freedom Campaign.

—DAN FEIN

Tokyo moves to establish missile shield

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Working closely with Washington, Tokyo is moving to rapidly bring online a version of the land- and sea-based antiballistic missile shield developed by the U.S. military. The Pentagon is developing the shield to allow the U.S. military to regain first-strike capacity with its formidable nuclear arsenal.

On March 30, a year earlier than scheduled, the Japanese government deployed its first batteries of Patriot Advanced Capability-3 missiles at an airbase north of Tokyo. Washington already has about 20 batteries installed on its base in Okinawa.

A week earlier the Japanese cabinet passed "emergency response" guidelines allowing the country's defense minister to order incoming ballistic missiles to be shot down without prior approval from the prime minister. "Although it may not be sufficient, it is the first step toward missile defense," said Japanese defense minister Fumio Kyuma.

The sea-based Standard Missile-3 interceptor launcher, which is the second component of the system, is scheduled to be installed by the end of this year on one of Japan's five U.S.-made Aegis-class destroyers.

The moves are part of Tokyo's rearmament and steady steps by Japanese imperialism to use its military abroad. In 2004 Tokyo sent troops to Iraq as part of the U.S.-led occupation forces in that country. In January, the government established a cabinet-level defense ministry. Both were firsts for Tokyo since its defeat by Washington in World War II.

The Militant

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Australia: Send A$50 to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Teachers' training school opens in Equatorial Guinea with assistance from Cuba

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

A teachers' training school staffed by Cuban internationalist volunteers opened in Bata, Equatorial Guinea, March 16. A press release from the Cuban consulate in the West African country noted that the school signifies a "qualitative and quantitative step for the educational system of Equatorial Guinea."

Equatorial Guinea, an oil-rich nation with 540,000 people, has a primary school student-teacher ratio of 43 to 1. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), only 24 percent of the high school–aged population was enrolled in secondary education in 2004.

The program is part of an agreement between the governments of the two countries under which Cuban internationalists train Equatoguineans to become biology, chemistry, math, and physics teachers. It is carried out under the auspices of UNESCO.

The Cuban volunteer teachers join more than 140 Cuban medical personnel serving internationalist missions in the African country, aimed at collaborating with Equatoguineans in establishing and running their own health-care system. Cuban volunteers staff a medical school in Bata, and a number of Guinean students are studying medicine in Cuba.

Eight days after the program's inauguration, the Association of Equatoguinean Graduates from Cuba (ASEGEC) held an event at the Agricultural Training School in Malabo. The ASEGEC decided to organize its members to attend scientific, cultural, and solidarity events in Cuba, and to visit the Cuban universities where its members studied. It also set November 27 as a Day in Solidarity with Cuba.

ASEGEC members also participated in a March 12 activity in solidarity with the Cuban Five, according to a press release from the Cuban consulate there. The program, held at the Cuban Embassy in Malabo, featured clips of the movie "Cuba: the Untold Story," as well as speeches on the campaign to win freedom for the five Cuban internationalists imprisoned in the United States.

"Looking at the actions of the United States against Cuba," said Francisco Nchama, an Equatoguinean graduate from Cuba, "and now what they do in Iraq and Afghanistan, shows these acts are common to what they do." José Nguema, president of ASEGEC and coordinator of the Group in Solidarity with the Five, spoke about the need to increase efforts and actions to win freedom for the five.

New education minister stirs Kuwait



Nouria al-Sbeih, Kuwait's new education minister, in the country's parliament in Kuwait City April 2. She took the oath of office in the legislature despite interruptions from Islamist deputies who demanded in vain that she cover her hair.

Right-wing party makes gains in Quebec elections

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

TORONTO—The March 26 election in Quebec was marked by the surge of the Democratic Action of Quebec (ADQ), a right-wing party that opposes Quebec sovereignty, favoring instead "autonomy inside Canada."

The ADQ finished second with 31 percent of the votes and 41 seats, compared to four in the previous election.

The Liberal Party of Quebec (PLQ) remains the ruling party but with only 33 percent of the votes and 48 seats, down from 76. It now ranks third among Quebecois.

The Parti Quebecois (PQ), a bourgeois nationalist party supporting Quebec sovereignty, finished third with 28 percent of the votes and 36 seats, down from 45.

Eighty percent of people in Quebec speak French and face institutionalized oppression on the basis of their language. The Quebecois have led sustained and at time massive struggles for their rights.

The results of the election mark a further fragmentation of Canadian politics, as contending capitalist forces are unable to offer a stable solution to the economic and social crisis. "Both Quebec and Canada have now reached a new summit of unpredictability," said an editorial in the March 27 Montreal daily *La Presse.* In Quebec and on the federal level minority governments now rule.

ADQ leader Mario Dumont campaigned for limits to "accommodating" Muslims and Jews. His call for a Quebec constitution that would include "our national values" opened the road to a few small-town councils adopting anti-immigrant resolutions. The ADQ won all its seats outside Montreal, where most immigrants are concentrated. Its candidates campaigned against "big government," proposing the abolition of all school boards.

The ADQ's rise was fueled by the majority of people in Quebec rejecting the austerity policies implemented by the Liberal Party government, in particular attacks on social programs and broken promises to reduce taxes. Financial concessions to Quebec a week before the election by the Conservative government in Ottawa could not reverse the tide against the Liberals.

PQ support is at its lowest level since it first took power in 1976. Since then it has alternated in office with the Liberals, implementing similar programs on economic and social issues.

Since the 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty, which was lost with the slimmest of margins, the PQ has put sovereignty on the back burner, leading to growing cynicism among its supporters.

Despite the tight race among the three parties, turnout was the second lowest on record.

The rise of a right-wing party in Quebec and the decline of the Parti Quebecois are fueling speculations that the Conservative Party of Stephen Harper will rapidly try to provoke an election in the hope of winning a majority of seats in Ottawa. Conservatives made inroads in Quebec in the 2006 federal elections. They went from 0 to 10 seats, mostly in areas where the ADQ is now strong.

Tel Aviv strengthens its missile shield

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Israel's Arrow ballistic missile defense system can intercept and destroy any ballistic missile currently possessed by other governments in the Middle East, Ariel Herzog, director of the Israeli Defense Ministry's Homa Missile Defense Agency, told the *Jerusalem Post* in an April 1 interview.

Tel Aviv seeks to preserve its ability to use its formidable nuclear arsenal as a club in the region, even if other countries in the area eventually build their own nuclear weapons. The Israeli military is developing other systems to blunt the effectiveness of conventional warheads, like the Scud and Katyusha missile.

The Arrow system successfully hit its target—a ballistic missile similar to an Iranian-built Shihab missile—in a nighttime test February 11, the Israeli military announced. The system is half-financed by the U.S. government and is partially built by U.S. defense contractor Boeing.

Another system, called David's Sling, is designed to intercept medium-range missiles. The system Iron Dome is aimed at stopping short-range Kassam and Katyusha rockets—4,000 of which struck Israel during the recent Israeli war Lebanon.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA
San Francisco

Imperialism's Sharpening Confrontation with Iran: Why Working People Should Oppose U.N. Sanctions and U.S. Military Threats. Speaker: Cindy Jaquith. Sat., April 21. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. *3824 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.*

FLORIDA
Miami

***Coolies, Sailors, and Settlers.* A Video on Chinese Immigration to the Americas.** Fri., April 20, Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. *8365 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 206. Tel.:(305) 751-6823.*

ILLINOIS
Chicago

How the Socialist Revolution in Cuba Took Up the Fight to End Anti-Chinese Racism. Speaker: Tom Leonard, former merchant seaman, veteran leader of the Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 21, 6:00 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *3557 S. Archer Ave. Tel.: (773) 890-1190.*

IOWA
Des Moines

How to Build Strong Unions Today. Speaker: Kevin Dwire, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 20. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. *3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.*

NEW YORK
Manhattan

Eyewitness Report from International Women's Conference in Venezuela: A Benefit for the *Militant* Fund Drive. Speakers: Olympia Newton and Maura DeLuca, *Militant* reporters just returned from Caracas. Fri., April 20. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. *307 W. 36th St. (use north elevators) 10th Floor. Tel.: (212) 629-6649.*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

From Somalia to Darfur: Imperialism Tightens Its Grip on Africa. Speakers: Representatives of Transafrica, Friends of the Congo, and Socialist Workers Party. Fri., April 20. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *3717 Georgia Avenue NW. Tel.: (202) 536-5080.*

SWEDEN
Stockholm

No to Threats Against Iran. Fri., April 20, 7:00 p.m. *Bildhuggarvägen 17, Johanneshov. Tel.: 08 316933.*

CALENDAR

Presentations of 'Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution'

MASSACHUSETTS
Boston

Wed., April 18, 3:00 p.m. Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written* and president of Pathfinder Press; Meizhu Lui, executive director, United for a Fair Economy, coauthor *The Color of Wealth*; Omar Ocampo, political science major, UMass Boston; Facilitator, Andrew Leong, associate professor, CPCS, Asian American Studies. Sponsors include Asian American Studies Program, Africana Studies Department, Latino Studies Program, Asian Student Center, Black Student Center, Casa Latina, and July 26th Coalition. *University of Massachusetts, Boston. Campus Center, Ballroom. For more information, call (877) 379-0467.*

NEW YORK
Queens

Sat., April 28, 2:00 p.m. Speakers: Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written* and president of Pathfinder Press; Carol Huang, assistant professor, School of Education, City College of New York. *Queens Library, 41-17 Main Street, Flushing. For more information, call (212) 629-6649.*

New Zealand: YS members campaign to free Cuban 5

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel.: (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY CALLUM WILLIAMSON

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Young Socialists from here and the United States campaigned March 14 at Auckland University to win support for five framed-up Cuban revolutionaries locked up in U.S. prisons.

The five—Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González—were arrested by the FBI in 1998 and convicted three years later on charges that included conspiracy to spy for Havana. They are serving sentences ranging from 15 years to a double-life term.

Ben Joyce, a Young Socialist from Albany, New York, spoke at a meeting of the Student Representative Council, open to all members of the Auckland University Student Association (AUSA).

Young people should defend the five, said Joyce, noting they are not only political prisoners but revolutionaries. Behind bars, the five "are continuing their political work on the frontlines of the U.S. class struggle." A student officer then moved that the "AUSA support the campaign to free the Cuban Five," which carried.

Later that afternoon, 11 people attended a campus meeting hosted by the AUSA International Affairs Officer. Joyce spoke there about the history of imperialist aggression against the Cuban Revolution. The five went to Miami and entered rightist Cuban American groups—which have a long record of violent attacks on Cuba carried out from U.S. soil with Washington's complicity—in order to disclose information on such activities to defend Cuba's sovereignty. Three of the five, he said, served in Cuba's internationalist mission in Angola to defend that country against invasion by South Africa's apartheid regime.

Joyce urged people to join the January 10–April 30 international campaign of solidarity with the Cuban Five, initiated by the Union of Young Communists and other youth organizations in Cuba.

Ben O'Shaughnessy contributed to this article.



Militant/Mike Tucker

YS members Ben Joyce (right) from Albany, New York, and Nick Fowler (second from left) from Auckland, New Zealand, campaign March 14 at Auckland University.

Iraq: Thousands protest U.S. military occupation

Continued from front page

Bush! Down with America!"

The protest was part of the jockeying by al-Sadr's forces—one of the factions of the Iraqi capitalist class fighting a tit-for-tact war against other Shiite and Sunni capitalists for power and for the country's resources—to keep their ranks united and maintain influence in Baghdad.

Two days earlier, U.S. and Iraqi government troops fought fierce battles in Diwaniyah, just west of Najaf, to wrest control of the city from al-Sadr's Mahdi militia. The U.S. military reportedly used combat aircraft and ground troops in house-to-house raids. The Mahdi militia is a special target of the crackdown in Iraq, led by thousands of additional U.S. troops being sent mostly to the capital, with the aim of establishing a stable capitalist regime in Iraq friendly to U.S. interests in the region. Al-Sadr's group also works within the Iraqi government, holding 32 seats in the 275-member parliament and heading six cabinet ministries.

The U.S. military says the Shiite militia is showing signs of splintering as some of its leaders fail to heed orders to avoid conflict with U.S. and Iraqi government troops. By lying low himself and opposing a direct fight, al-Sadr hopes to preserve his position among competing Iraqi bourgeois forces.

Mounthir al-Quzueeni, a taxi driver and Mahdi militiaman, told the *Washington Post* that he had heard the government's request not to fight street battles but would follow a higher order by Sadr's father, a Shiite martyr under the Saddam Hussein regime, to resist occupying forces. "Of course we obey the orders of our leader," said Abdul Razak al-Nidawi, a Sadr spokesman. "But there is a limit to our patience and self-restraint."

In another sign of this splintering, al-Sadr reportedly fired two members of his parliamentary bloc after they had dinner at the home of former Iraqi prime minister Ibrahim Jaafari, where David Petraeus, the top U.S. general in Iraq, was in attendance.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military is reportedly winning support from 25 of 31 leading Sunni sheiks in Anbar province in fighting al-Qaeda "terrorists." The Sunni-led Anbar Salvation Front is providing thousands of young recruits to the Iraqi army and police and intelligence to the U.S. military.

Some 30 alleged al-Qaeda members were recently arrested in Ramadi after being fingered by a local sheik. U.S. intelligence officials say the change has come as a result of desperate actions by al-Qaeda, including shaking down truck drivers for oil and gas supplies and extorting shopkeepers.

'Militant' subs

Continued from front page

and sold 130 copies of the paper at the action. At smaller rallies the same day in New York and Los Angeles to oppose U.S. policies toward Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia, nine more people subscribed.

"One fellow worker who expressed discontent with the 'immigration reform' bills now in Congress subscribed," said Maggie Trowe, a butcher in a meat provisioning plant in Miami. "She said the *Militant* is a good paper."

"Despite winter weather hanging on, we have had good results at literature tables and showing the paper door-to-door in working-class areas," said Beverly Bernardo in Toronto. "We have sold 25 subs so far. One of them was to a worker who arrived here from Mexico five months ago and has worked all over North America, including on the fishing boats in Alaska."

To give an extra boost to the campaign, *Militant* supporters are planning a "target week" of sales between Saturday, April 21, and Sunday, April 29. During those nine days, in addition to regular outreach on the job, at school, and beyond, they will field daily teams in their cities and broader region.

One of these teams will go to the Navajo Nation in Arizona and New Mexico April 19–23 to sell subs to coal miners and other working people in the region.

Join the effort! Contact the *Militant* or distributors listed on p. 8.

Spring 'Militant' Subscription Drive
March 31 – May 27 ♦ Week 1 of 8

Country	Quota	Sold	%
UNITED KINGDOM			
LONDON	**75**	**28**	**37%**
Edinburgh	30	1	3%
UK Total	**105**	**29**	**28%**
AUSTRALIA	**45**	**11**	**24%**
NEW ZEALAND	**60**	**12**	**20%**
CANADA	**130**	**25**	**19%**
UNITED STATES			
San Diego, CA	**10**	**5**	**50%**
San Francisco	**110**	**41**	**37%**
Albany, NY	**10**	**2**	**20%**
Newark, NJ	**120**	**23**	**19%**
Miami	**170**	**32**	**19%**
Seattle	**70**	**13**	**19%**
Twin Cities	**140**	**26**	**19%**
Chicago	**90**	**16**	**18%**
Boston	**85**	**14**	**16%**
Philadelphia*	**120**	**19**	**16%**
Birmingham	**125**	**19**	**15%**
Des Moines	**125**	**18**	**14%**
New York	**320**	**44**	**14%**
Los Angeles	**120**	**16**	**13%**
Washington, DC	105	12	11%
Pittsburgh	65	6	9%
Houston	100	7	7%
Atlanta	115	8	7%
Tampa	5	0	0%
U.S. Total	**2,005**	**321**	**16%**
SWEDEN	**35**	**5**	**14%**
ICELAND	12	1	8%
Int'l totals	**2,392**	**404**	**17%**
Should be	**2,400**	**300**	**13%**

$17,500 needed by April 18 for spring 'Militant' fund drive

BY PAUL PEDERSON

April 11—*Militant* supporters in nine U.S. cities, and in Australia, France, New Zealand, and Sweden, have sent in $7,615 for the paper's fund drive so far. This is about $5,000 short of the $12,500 needed weekly to meet the $100,000 international goal by the end of May.

"We are appealing to all our readers to help us raise another $17,500 by Wednesday, April 18, to get the fund on track by the end of week two," said *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis. "The funds are needed now."

Militant reporters—including fund director Olympia Newton—are now in Caracas covering an international women's conference (see front-page article), he noted. At the end of the month, another reporting team will be going to Cuba.

"The *Militant* depends on donations from workers, farmers, students—from all its readers—to pay for these trips and help cover operating expenses such as printing and shipping," Malapanis said.

As progress is made in the fund, "We are encouraging *Militant* supporters everywhere to consider increasing their quotas," Malapanis said. Local quotas now add up to just below $94,000—some $6,000 short of the international goal.

Checks should be made out to The Militant, earmarked "Fund Drive," and sent to 306 West 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

$100,000 'Militant' Fund Drive
March 31 –May 27 ♦ Week 1 of 8

Country	Quota	Paid	%
FRANCE	**300**	**80**	**27%**
AUSTRALIA	**1,400**	**225**	**16%**
SWEDEN	500	47	9%
UNITED STATES			
New York	**14,000**	**3,450**	**25%**
Atlanta	**6,000**	**1,310**	**22%**
Pittsburgh	**3,000**	**410**	**14%**
San Francisco	**10,000**	**1,300**	**13%**
Newark, NJ	3,500	300	9%
Des Moines	2,000	100	5%
Houston	3,000	140	5%
Miami	3,200	75	2%
Seattle	7,000	150	2%
Albany, NY	50	0	0%
Birmingham	2,500	0	0%
Boston	3,800	0	0%
Chicago	5,000	0	0%
Los Angeles	8,000	0	0%
Philadelphia	3,800	0	0%
San Diego	500	0	0%
Twin Cities	5,000	0	0%
Washington, D.C.	3,000	0	0%
U.S. total	83,350	7,235	9%
NEW ZEALAND	2,800	28	1%
CANADA	3,500	0	0%
ICELAND	450	0	0%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	400	0	0%
London	1,300	0	0%
UK total	1,700	0	0%
Intl'l totals	**93,700**	**7,615**	**8%**
Goal/Should be	**100,000**	**12,500**	**13%**

ON THE PICKET LINE

Metal workers in Illinois strike for better wages and conditions

AURORA, Illinois—Some 50 metal workers here have been on strike since March 5 at Fox Valley Forge. The workers are demanding their first union contract, a dollar-an-hour wage increase, an end to piecework wages, and better treatment on the job. Most of the strikers have worked for years at Fox Valley and saw their real wages fall steadily as the bosses cut piecework rates. Many workers are from Morelios, Mexico. They organized themselves as the *Movimiento Obrero 15 de Septiembre* (September 15 Workers Movement), and in 2005 won recognition of their union, Boilermakers Local 1600. Residents from nearby neighborhoods and other workers frequently come to the picket line to show their support.

The bosses are threatening to replace strikers, who say they won't return without a contract and better wages.

—Harvey McArthur

Toronto auto workers occupy plant to demand severance pay

TORONTO—Workers from Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 303 shut down production at the Collins & Aikman auto plant here March 30–April 2, demanding the bosses guarantee them previously committed severance pay. The plant is scheduled to close in July. About 100 workers occupied the plant with another 100 rallying outside. The shutdown ended after company officials told union negotiators that laid-off workers would get some severance payments.

The company, which manufactures automotive floor and acoustic systems, has laid off hundreds of workers since November. Out of a full production workforce of about 450 workers, 112 with the highest seniority are still employed to fulfill a contract with Chrysler. The company filed for bankruptcy in the United States in May 2005.

—Sandra Mitchell

Report faults British Petroleum for 2005 Texas refinery explosion

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

SAN FRANCISCO—On the eve of the second anniversary of an explosion at the British Petroleum (BP) refinery in Texas City, Texas, a federal safety panel issued a bluntly worded report placing the blame squarely on the company. The blast killed 15 people and injured 180.

The number one cause of the explosion, according to the report by the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB), was cuts in spending to boost profits. "The combination of cost-cutting, production pressures, and failure to invest caused a progressive deterioration of safety at the refinery," said CSB chair Carolyn Merritt at a March 20 news conference in Houston.

Necessary preventative maintenance on aging equipment was slashed, workloads in refinery operations were sharply increased as jobs were cut, and training programs were eliminated.

Then, on March 23, 2005, nearly 180 barrels of highly flammable light hydrocarbon were released into the atmosphere at the plant's isomerization unit, as it was being brought back on line after a maintenance "turnaround." The main causes of the release were woefully inadequate and antiquated pressure relief systems and faulty instrumentation that had long gone unrepaired.

This hydrocarbon quickly vaporized, found a source of ignition—a diesel truck idling nearby—and a giant fireball shot into the sky followed by a tremendous shock wave. Structures were blown apart, including temporary trailers full of workers, and a massive fire ensued.

The refinery industry has long touted itself as safe, pointing to decreasing injury rates. But the CSB report points out that BP executives "were largely focused on personal safety—such as slips, trips, falls, and vehicle accidents—rather than on improving process safety performance, which continued to deteriorate."

This was echoed by the findings of an investigatory commission initiated by BP and headed by former U.S. secretary of state James Baker. The commission said process safety was a problem throughout the oil industry.

Other factors in the BP explosion identified by the CSB included:

• Vulnerability of temporary trailers widely and routinely used in refinery settings. All 15 deaths at the BP blast were of personnel in and around trailers.

• Operator fatigue. All personnel in the unit at the time of the explosion had worked 12-hour shifts for 29 or more consecutive days during the turnaround.

• Failure of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The report found that despite numerous fatal incidents from 1985 to 2005, OSHA conducted only one major process safety inspection at the Texas City refinery. A similar pattern was observed in refineries around the country.

The problems at BP are not unique. Both the CSB and the Baker commission reports stressed that their findings have more general application in oil refining. A March 23 *Los Angeles Times* article said, "Refineries in California and across the country are breaking down with unusual frequency this year. . . . The breakdowns stem from the hard use of aging equipment, a shortage of trained workers, corporate cost cutting and ownership changes, refinery experts say."

Kim Nibarger, a safety expert for the United Steelworkers, which represents most union-organized refinery workers, testified to this point at a March 22 hearing on refinery safety before the congressional Education and Labor Committee. In the first six weeks of 2007, he said, there were 43 incidents involving pipeline leaks, chemical releases, plant breakdowns, and fires.

Jerry Freiwirth is an oil refinery operator and a member of the United Steelworkers Local 5.

Miners' strike

Continued from front page

struck to demand the bosses honor the BCOA contract at all three locations.

The 2007 national coal pact includes a 20 percent wage raise and pension increases for future retirees.

A few hours after the strike started, Foundation said it would close the Illinois mine, claiming it is not profitable.

National and local officers of the union were among those on the platform here. UMWA president Cecil Roberts, the main speaker, said the company "lied to the workers and their families in Wabash. They took $30,000 from each of us."

In 2002 Wabash workers agreed to concessions, amounting to $30,000 per miner over five years, after the bosses promised to invest more, such as for building a new entrance.

UMWA communications director Phil Smith said Foundation "lost money at this mine, but the company as a whole has shown millions of profits." The company employs 3,000 workers in 14 mines. It reported $1.47 billion in revenues last year and $31 million in profits.

"There is 20 to 30 years of coal left in this mine," said Brenda Howard, referring to Wabash. One of four women miners there, Howard operated a shuttle car hauling coal out of the mine, and worked at Foundation for 27 years. She and other strikers said the bosses want to claim bankruptcy, close the mine, and reopen it nonunion.

On the picket lines in Keensburg, miners were eager to explain why they walked out. "We gave back money, health-care benefits, and some overtime pay," said Rick Ott, a diesel truck mechanic, referring to the 2002 cuts.

Kevin Hess, a roof bolter, has been mining for 38 years, 21 of them at Wabash. "This time we won't take more concessions," he said. "Most mines around here are nonunion, where workers make more money, and some get benefits. But they are riding on what we get."



Militant/Tony Lane

Miners picket the Emerald Mine near Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, April 7.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT — 25 CENTS — A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

April 23, 1982

The Reagan administration has made a back-door move toward reinstating the 1960s ban on travel to Cuba.

On April 9 American Airways Charter, Inc. (AAC) was ordered to halt its flights. The company is the principal carrier between the United States and Cuba.

Shutdown of AAC comes after persistent harassment of the company and a February 25 grand jury indictment of several of its officials on charges of violating the Trading With the Enemy Act.

The new move comes during a time when Washington has been escalating its acts of hostility against Cuba, Nicaragua, and Grenada, as well as deepening its intervention in El Salvador.

In 1960, President Eisenhower banned travel to Cuba by decree. Under challenge, the Supreme Court finally ruled this a violation of constitutional rights.

THE MILITANT — PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE — NEW YORK, N.Y. — FIVE (5) CENTS

April 22, 1957

The two main features of the 16th constitutional convention of the United Auto Workers, held April 7–12 in Atlantic City, were the victory of the Reuther machine in pushing through all its proposals, and the evidence of a growing opposition within the ranks to Reuther's policies. The opposition was unorganized, however, and lacked a clear program. It was composed largely of delegates attending their first convention. The result was that the administration machine—having adopted the slogan of a shorter work week and higher pay and having more recently adopted a militant phraseology on speed-up—rolled through the convention like a well-oiled steamroller.

The convention was arranged to avoid discussion of most of the pressing economic and political problems now facing the workers in the auto union and the labor movement in general.

THE MILITANT — Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

April 23, 1932

Many credulous workers have suffered from the illusion, and possibly still do, that wage reductions bring an increase of jobs. To those there have been a number of decisive and hard hitting answers given in the rounds of wage cutting which have followed one another in rapid succession during the crisis and with the unemployment figures still mounting.

The most recent wage reductions actual or contemplated, are symptomatic of the fact that the formerly more privileged strata of the working class are now ever more becoming the victims, the same as the lower paid, unskilled ones. In New York City the printers and the building trades are having their scales "adjusted." Intimations are made in no uncertain terms by the United States Steel Corporation directors that their several hundred thousand workers are due for another cut.

Events held in Iowa on Chinese Cubans in Cuban Revolution

BY KEVIN DWIRE

DES MOINES, Iowa —Two recent meetings on the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution* drew students, professors, and others at the University of Iowa in Iowa City and at Drake University in this city.

At both campuses, Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the book and president of Pathfinder Press, took part in panel presentations along with students and professors who had read the book.

Ben Mai, a student at the University of Iowa and president of the Asian American Coalition, chaired the April 4 Iowa City meeting, attended by 40 people. He said students had decided to hold the event because the book "brings up questions about race, what we confront as we fight racism, and something not widely known: the history of Chinese in Cuba."

Mai, whose family is Vietnamese, said the interviews with the three generals—Armando Choy, Gustavo Chui, and Moisés Sío Wong—show that "they believed in what they are fighting for, that they believed in themselves."

Also on this panel were John Lee, president of the Korean Undergraduate Student Association, and Marcella David, a law professor and associate provost at the university.

Lee said that reading *Our History Is Still Being Written* helped him realize "that race is not a biological question, it is a socially constructed idea."

Waters said the men and women who made the Cuban Revolution "weren't extraordinary human beings. They were young people who in the course of the revolution transformed themselves. They weren't thinking of making a socialist revolution—they wanted to make a more egalitarian society through land reform, literacy, and health care for all, as well as equality for women and an end to racial discrimination.

"As they carried out this program, they came into conflict with the U.S. government and the ruling capitalist families here that owned enormous property in Cuba, and they refused to back down. That is where the socialist revolution in Cuba came from."

More than an hour of discussion followed as people in the audience asked questions such as: Has racism been eliminated in Cuba or is there tension under the surface that could come out in a conflict like Yugoslavia? Is Cuba going to follow the way of China? How is Cuba different from what existed in the Soviet Union?

Waters explained that the revolution uprooted the economic foundations of racism "but that doesn't mean that Cuba isn't facing the legacy of decades of racism from their prerevolutionary history." She said the question of confronting racism is discussed openly in Cuba today. But her own experience, "from growing up in the United States when Jim Crow laws were still in place, to spending time in a society where racism is a minor factor in the interrelationships between human beings—especially among young people—the contrast is striking."

Noting there is racism against Asians in the United States, Mai said, "Only a small number of Asian Americans are 'doing well.' In fact, financial aid for Asian American students is being cut."





Militant photos by Seth Galinsky

Above: April 5 event at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, on *Our History Is Still Being Written*. From left: panelists Matthew Esposito, Arson Xu, Mary-Alice Waters, Verónica Méndez, and Samuel Li. Right: part of audience at meeting.

The meeting at Drake University the following evening, which was attended by about 50 people, was marked by participation of international students, who hailed from Bahrain, Palestine, Jordan, Bosnia, Latvia, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Spain, China, south Korea, India, Pakistan, Ecuador, and Mexico. Several U.S.-born students were also present. The event was sponsored by the International Student Association (ISA), La Fuerza Latina (LFL), the Center for Global Citizenship, and the Chinese Iowa Association.

Arson Xu, a Chinese-born student who is president of the ISA, said he found it interesting that revolutionaries in Cuba "are staying in their beliefs in socialism."

Samuel Li, who is Chinese-Ecuadorian and a member of La Fuerza Latina, said the book "was a real eye-opener for me. Before I didn't think Cuba was a country worth thinking about. Now I see there is a lot we can learn from Cuba. It made me interested in the ideas of socialism."

Also on the panel were Verónica Méndez of LFL, who gave a brief overview of the book, and history professor Matthew Esposito, who pointed out that "it wasn't until the revolution that the Chinese in Cuba had all the privileges and rights that come with being Cuban."

Waters said the most important lesson in the book was Sío Wong's point that the difference between the experience of Chinese in Cuba and in other countries was that a socialist revolution took place, eliminating the property relations at the root of economic and social inequality.

The discussion, lasting more than an hour, centered on socialism and the future of the Cuban Revolution.

"What are the major obstacles to the development of socialism in Cuba?" asked Vladimir Sesar, a student from Bosnia.

"The biggest source of problems is economic scarcity," Waters answered. "Socialism can never be built on the basis of economic scarcity. In the Soviet Union there was a social layer that had enormous material privileges that most did not have, and they defended that against the majority. That didn't happen in Cuba. The difference is a leadership, a class question."

Another student asked whether the new generation in Cuba "shares the goal of socialism, and will they keep the revolution going?"

Waters said that "tens of thousands of Cuban young people are involved in internationalist missions. For these young people it is their first experience living under capitalism and seeing what life is like in other underdeveloped countries in Latin America. They see the slums, the homeless children, the lack of education and medical care. They see what capitalism really means, and they come home with a different consciousness."

Those attending the two meetings bought a number of Pathfinder books. These included not only *Our History Is Still Being Written* but titles ranging from *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* to *The Truth About Yugoslavia.*

New Zealand tour promotes book by Chinese Cuban generals

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Events over three days here in mid-March helped promote the book *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution,* published by Pathfinder Press.

The Chinese Centre at the Auckland University of Technology sponsored a public meeting March 14 featuring Martín Koppel, a *Militant* reporter who helped interview the three authors of the book. Hosted by Marlene Lu, head of the Chinese Centre, the event was cosponsored by Pathfinder Books and Bananaworks, a media company oriented to Chinese New Zealanders.

Many in the audience of 25, including several of Chinese ancestry, asked questions about the Cuban Revolution and the history of Chinese Cubans.

It sounds like the first Chinese in Cuba were treated like slaves, one questioner remarked, referring to how they were first brought as indentured laborers in the 19th century.

"Yes, and their response to those conditions led to a history of struggle, from the independence wars against Spanish colonial rule to the 1959 revolution and establishment of a workers and farmers government," said Koppel.

"It's a testament to a heritage that comes out of struggle," Koppel replied to a question about why many Chinese Cubans today, while integrated into Cuban society, strive to maintain their culture. He added that the Cuban government is promoting that heritage through the restoration of Havana's Chinatown and other cultural projects.

"Is Cuba introducing market reforms like China?" was another query. Koppel explained that, while Cuba is inevitably exposed to the effects of the world capitalist market, its revolutionary leadership—unlike the regime in Beijing—takes initiatives that promote solidarity among working people to counteract social inequalities.


New Zealand Chinese Herald

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先驅報

古巴的華人將軍和古巴華人

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C8 青春勵志

勞動生產力增長創新低

ISSN 1177-1690

March 17 issue of New Zealand *Chinese Herald* with article on March 14 meeting at Chinese Centre at Auckland University of Technology on *Our History Is Still Being Written*. Speaking is Martín Koppel, an interviewer of the Chinese Cuban generals who authored the book.

Two Chinese-language newspapers covered the meeting in their March 17 issues. The lead article in the *Chinese Herald*, by journalist Portia Mao, was headlined "Chinese Generals and the Chinese in Cuba." The *New Zealand Mirror* ran a full-page feature titled "The struggle of the Chinese in Cuba." Triangle Television filmed the event and interviewed Koppel, broadcasting its report on its program "The Mirror."

During the tour Koppel met with staff at the University of Auckland's Centre for Latin American Studies and School of Asian Studies. The latter event was hosted by Manying Ip, a prominent author on the history of racism against Chinese in New Zealand. Koppel also spoke to a class of Asian Studies students at the university.

Koppel was accompanied on the speaking tour by Ben Joyce, a member of the Young Socialists from Albany, New York. The two addressed a March 15 Militant Labour Forum on "Cuba and the Coming American Revolution," and Joyce spoke at a meeting at the University of Auckland on the campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries framed up by Washington (see YS column on page 4).

Earlier that day they visited a Maori land occupation at Whenuakite, where they received a traditional welcome. Leaders of the protest explained the history of the dispossession of Maori of their lands and the struggle to regain it. Koppel presented the Maori rights fighters with a copy of *Our History Is Still Being Written.*

U.S. smear campaign of Cuban libraries falls flat

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HAVANA—Opponents of the Cuban Revolution were soundly defeated, once again, in their latest efforts to get the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) to join a campaign in support of fake "independent libraries" in Cuba.

Eliades Acosta, until recently the director of the José Martí National Library here, reports that the Cuban delegation won further support at the last IFLA convention in rejecting this attack on Cuba. Some 4,000 delegates representing 115 countries attended that gathering, held last August in Seoul, south Korea.

A resolution condemning the "persecution of independent librarians in Cuba and the seizure and burning of their library collections" had originally gained the sponsorship of the Latvian and Lithuanian librarians associations and was due to be debated by the international convention. The resolution, in fact, was drafted by Robert Kent, a New York librarian and head of an outfit called "Friends of Cuban Libraries," whose mission is to discredit the Cuban Revolution.

The "Friends of Cuban Libraries" has received money from the U.S.-financed Freedom House, and Kent has a long record of activity against the Cuban Revolution. None of the "independent librarians" are librarians. They are all members of small political groups on the island that oppose the revolution and are dependent on U.S. government funding.

Kent's wild allegations that books by Mark Twain and George Orwell are banned, that the Cuban government burns books of which it disapproves, and imprisons and tortures "independent librarians" have been exposed and discredited over the years. Official American Library Association (ALA) and IFLA delegations to Cuba in 2001 confirmed that the "independent libraries" were a fraud, and the IFLA council voted to reject the allegations.

At the Seoul IFLA convention, Kent tried to enlist delegations from Eastern Europe. When the Lithuanian delegation contacted the Association of Cuban Librarians (ASCUBI), however, they were surprised to find that Kent's claims were bogus and withdrew their support for the anti-Cuba resolution.

Acosta said, "I told them [Lithuanian librarians]: come to Cuba, see for yourselves, go to the falsely named independent libraries, then visit ours and draw your own conclusions."

Emilija Banionyte, vice president of the Lithuanian library association, wrote to ASCUBI president Margarita Bellas, "We are terribly sorry for this misunderstanding. Hope you do understand that our intentions were to help you. We had no idea that Mr. Robert Kent is acting without your knowledge." Banionyte also wrote to the Hungarian delegation about why they had withdrawn, stating that they had been duped by Kent's "political game."

Lacking the support of at least two national associations, the resolution could not even be put before the IFLA convention. At the 2005 convention in Oslo, Norway, Kent's maneuver to garner the support of the Polish delegation also failed.

At the Seoul gathering the seven-member Cuban delegation, headed by Dr. Marta Terry, received messages of support from IFLA officials as well as Polish, Czech, Russian, and Chinese librarians. The Cubans "held an important meeting with the ALA, whose new president, Leslie Burger, accepted ASCUBI's invitation to visit Cuba," Acosta said.

Cuba expands libraries, publishing

The problem faced by Cuban libraries is not government censorship but rather a lack of sufficient resources—largely due to the U.S. trade embargo—to meet the demand for books among a population that is highly literate because of Cuba's socialist revolution.

A recent report titled "Impact of the U.S. government's blockade on Cuban libraries, 2001–2005," by Vilma Ponce Suárez and Nuria Pérez Matos of the José Martí National Library, details Washington's visa denials and other obstacles to free exchanges between librarians, the limits to Cuba's access to technology including internet access, and the blocking of donations to Cuban libraries.

Far from burning or suppressing books, Cuba continues to expand its library system and publishing efforts. Today there are 415 public libraries across the island, including in the most isolated areas, up from 389 in 2001. In 2003, nearly 9 million Cubans used the library services, borrowing 13.5 million books, according to the Ministry of Culture.



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Half a million people attended 16th International Book Fair in Havana (above). Far from suppressing books or "independent libraries," as Washington claims, Cuba is expanding its library system and book-publishing efforts.

And this year's Havana International Book Fair attracted more than half a million people. The fair traveled to 39 other cities before finally ending March 11 in Santiago de Cuba. Millions of books were sold on a vast range of subjects through the course of the fair.

Eliades Acosta has since taken a new assignment as head of the Committee on Culture of the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee. In signing off as director of the national library, he issued an open letter to Robert Kent, expressing his "pleasure and pride" in having exposed Washington's lies against the Cuban Revolution and pledging to continue to do so (see his letter on this page).

Supporters of Cuba's libraries are now ready to take on Washington's disinformation campaign at the June 21–27 ALA convention in Washington, D.C.

Letter from Eliades Acosta to Robert Kent

The following are major excerpts from a letter by Eliades Acosta, the former director of Cuba's National Library who recently became head of the Committee on Culture of the Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee. It is addressed to Robert Kent, who has led a U.S.-government backed campaign against the Cuban Revolution described in the article above. The letter was published in the March 23 issue of Librínsula, *the weekly online magazine of Cuba's National Library.*

Mr. Kent,

As you well know, I am saying goodbye to my friends and enemies now that I have left the directorship of the National Library to assume new tasks related to the culture and politics of my country.

I depart with mixed feelings. The feelings relating directly to you, or rather, to what you represent and for whom you work, are of enormous satisfaction: I have carried out with pleasure and pride the duty of confronting and unmasking you in all possible venues, showing to the world the magnitude of the immense fraud called the "independent libraries" in Cuba. Few times in my life have I learned a greater lesson than is signified by the fallaciousness and lack of scruples of those who, for money, are capable of lying and manipulating public opinion in a manner so vile and repetitious, without an atom of dignity or decorum, like pawns in the merciless struggle against the Cuban Revolution carried out by the U.S. government. On few occasions, such as the present, have I better understood that when the enemy feels obligated to lie and act in this manner it is because they are desperate and fully conscious of their defeat.

My departure, as you well know, is hardly transitory. In my new job I will keep current with the exemplary manner in which, day by day, the true Cuban librarians, and their friends throughout the world, will continue fighting against the attacks of the government for which you work. . . .

You can count on the fact that, together with the Cuban librarians, I will continue fighting in all possible ways everything associated with your name, for the culture of my country and for our principles. Count on the fact that the struggle will continue and that I, with pleasure and pride, will continue enjoying, as I enjoy now, every new victory of the Cuban Revolution, which inspires such hate and frustration among its [enemies], just as it inspires solidarity and support among the peoples of the world.

Until the next battle, Mr. Kent.

—ELIADES ACOSTA MATOS

'Free the Cuban Five!'

Continued from front page

demands. "The U.S. economic blockade is an attempt to starve the Cuban people into submission," said Matt Candell, a student at Fordham University in the Bronx, at the march here. "These attacks against Cuba today are a continuation of U.S. foreign policy since 1959." Candell was referring to the year working people in Cuba overthrew the U.S-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and opened the road to socialism in the Americas.

Representatives of political organizations and Cuba and Venezuela solidarity groups spoke at the concluding rally, held at the south edge of Central Park by the statues of Cuban national hero José Martí and Venezuelan national hero Simón Bolívar. Sponsors included the Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle, ANSWER coalition, Casa de las Americas, Cuba Solidarity New York, ProLibertad Freedom Campaign, Socialist Workers Party, Workers World, and Young Socialists.

A message sent by the Cuban Five—Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, and Ramón Labañino—was read at the rally. (For information on their case see "The Cuban 5: Revolutionaries framed-up by Washington" in April 16 *Militant.*)

"The generosity and solidarity of the North American people towards Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia are welcome and appreciated," said the statement. "Our gratitude goes to all of you who stand in support of the right of our countries, including our sister island of Puerto Rico."

In a statement read at the rally, Leonard Weinglass, a leading defense attorney for the Cuban Five, said that a panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals has scheduled a hearing on August 20 in Atlanta, as part of their review of the defendants' appeal of their trial and convictions.

Prospects for socialist revolution in the United States

Below is an excerpt from The Long View of History, *one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. Author George Novack explains why the struggle of working people for an end to oppression and exploitation is a realistic perspective built on sound scientific foundations, and why revolutionary change is fundamental to social and cultural progress. Copyright © 1960 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY GEORGE NOVACK

The industrial age was launched around the beginning of the nineteenth century with the application of steam power to the first mechanized processes, concentrating large numbers of wage workers into factories. The capitalist captains of this large-scale industry became masters of the field of production and later of entire countries and continents as their riches, their legions of wage laborers, social and political power, swelled to majestic proportions.

This vigorous, expanding, progressive, confident, competitive stage of industrial capitalism dominated the nineteenth century. It passed over into the monopoly-ridden capitalism of the



Raul Rubiera/Fayetteville Observer

About 1,000 workers at Smithfield slaughterhouse in Tar Heel, North Carolina, walk off job, Nov. 17, 2006, to protest firing of coworkers for "false documents." The most vital and valuable of all social forces capitalism has created is the industrial workers, says Novack.

twentieth century, which has carried all the basic tendencies of capitalism, and especially its most reactionary features, to extremes in economic, political, cultural, and international relations. While the processes of production have become more centralized, more rationalized, more socialized, the means of production and the wealth of the world have become concentrated in giant financial and industrial combines. So far as the capitalist sectors of society are involved, this process has been brought to the point where the capitalist monopolies of a single country, the U.S., dictate to all the rest.

The most important question to be asked at this point is: What is the destiny of the development of civilization in its capitalist form? Disregarding in-between views, which at bottom evade the answer, two irreconcilable viewpoints assert themselves, corresponding to the world outlooks of two opposing classes. The spokesmen for capitalism say that nothing more remains to be done except to perfect their system as it stands, and it can roll on and on and on. The Do-All Corporation, for example, which published so instructive a chart on the evolution of tools, declares that more and better machine tools, which they hope will be bought at substantial profit from their company, will guarantee continued progress and prosperity for capitalist America without the least change in existing class relations.

Socialists give a completely different answer based upon an incomparably more penetrating, correct, and comprehensive analysis of the movement of history, the structure of capitalism, and the struggles presently agitating the world around us. The historical function of capitalism is not to perpetuate itself indefinitely but to create the conditions and prepare the forces that will bring about its own replacement by a more efficient form of material production and a higher type of social organization. Just as capitalism supplanted feudalism and slavery, and civilization swept aside savagery and barbarism, so the time has come for capitalism itself to be superseded. How and by whom is this revolutionary transformation to be effected?

In the last century, Marx made a scientific analysis of the workings of the capitalist system which explained how its inner contradictions would bring about its downfall. The revolutions of our own century since 1917 are demonstrating in real life that capitalism is due to be relegated to the museum of antiquities. It is worthwhile to understand the inexorable underlying causes of these developments, which appear so inexplicable and abhorrent to the upholders of the capitalist system.

Capitalism has produced many things, good and bad, in the course of its evolution. But the most vital and valuable of all the social forces it has created is the industrial working class. The capitalist class has brought into existence a vast army of wage laborers, centralized and disciplined, and set it into motion for its own purposes, to make and operate the machines, factories, and all the other production and transportation facilities from which its profits emanate.

The exploitation and abuses, inherent and inescapable in the capitalist organization of economic life, provoke the workers time and again to organize themselves and undertake militant action to defend their elementary interests. The struggle between these conflicting social classes is today the dominant and driving force of world and American history, just as the conflict between the bourgeois-led forces against the precapitalist elements was the motivating force of history in the immediately preceding centuries.

The current struggle, which has been gathering momentum and expanding its scope for a hundred years, has entered its decisive phase on a world scale. Except for Cuba, the preliminary battles between the procapitalist and the anticapitalist forces have so far been waged to a conclusion in countries outside the Western Hemisphere. Sooner or later, however, they are bound to break out and be fought to a finish within this country, which is not only the stronghold of capitalist power but also the home of the best-organized and technically most proficient working class on this globe.

The main line of development in America, no less than the course of world history, points to such a conclusion.

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EDITORIAL

Legalize the undocumented now!

Unconditional legalization of all undocumented immigrants now! That needs to become the battle cry of the U.S. labor movement and all working people.

The April 7 march in Los Angeles of some 15,000 people points in the right direction. So do thousands of workers throughout the United States who have responded to factory raids by refusing to buckle to the government and immigration cops and by winning solidarity from fellow workers and their unions. Such fights raise workers' confidence, boost prospects for unity of the working class, and increase the political stakes.

This is a life-and-death question for the weakening labor movement. A fight to legalize all immigrant workers, coupled with a drive to organize the unorganized, would galvanize the working class and its allies to effectively resist the bosses' unending assaults on wages, living and job conditions, safety, social security, and political rights. It would undercut the employers' untiring efforts to pit workers against each other: "legal" against "illegal," native-born against immigrant, white against Black, man against woman.

This is what the tiny minority of billionaires who rule the United States, and the government that represents them in Washington, are doing with their raids and deportations: divide and conquer. The current "immigration reform" proposals in Congress—by Democrats and Republicans—have the same goal: keep a steady flow of cheap immigrant labor into the country, which the bosses profit from, and maintain millions of workers as pariahs not covered by labor law, who can be super-exploited and scapegoated for capitalism's social ills.

The Gutiérrez-Flake bill introduced in the House, hailed by "friends of labor," is not about legalization. As many protesters in Los Angeles correctly pointed out, it could take 20 years for immigrants to gain residency under this bill and millions would never make it because of its onerous conditions. It's as bad as the proposals pushed by the White House, which would impose much stiffer fees for work visas or a green card.

Let's join immigrant workers in demanding: No to the bosses' immigration reform! Stop the raids and deportations! Drop the "identity theft" and other charges against those grabbed by *la migra*! Legalize all the undocumented, now, with no strings attached!

15,000 demand legalization at L.A. protest

Continued from front page

to win legalization. I built this march on the job." Juárez was referring to a proposal now pushed by U.S. president George Bush, which event organizers and protesters denounced. It would require immigrants to apply for three-year work visas that cost $3,500 to renew. Workers would have to leave the United States while their renewal application is processed. Those seeking U.S. residency would have to pay a $10,000 fee.

Another bill sponsored by U.S. representatives Luis Gutiérrez, a Democrat from California, and Jeff Flake, a Republican from Arizona, had been initially hailed by immigrant rights groups here. But it was also the target of criticism by many protesters today.

The measure would require immigrants to prove they worked in the United States before June 1, 2006, pay a $500 fine, and receive a security clearance to get a six-year work visa. After it expires, immigrants who pass English proficiency tests, don't have a criminal record, and pay an additional $1,500 would be eligible to apply for permanent residency upon return to their country of origin. This process could take as long as 20 years. This bill would also allow hundreds of thousands of "guest workers" to enter the country each year and work on a temporary basis, with their status tied to the whims of their bosses.

"Many people say they are concerned about the amount of time it would take to get legalization, on top of the many conditions they have to meet" through the Gutierrez-Flake bill, Angela Sanbrano, director of the Center of Central American Resources (CARECEN), told the Spanish-language daily *La Opinión.*

In spite of workplace raids across the country, workers marching today were not intimidated. Many expressed confidence in fighting for unconditional legalization. "I used to think it was a favor that we had jobs," said Jorge García, a laundry worker who marched with his family. "Now I know we have rights. Coming out to the marches and demonstrations is very important."

Rey Nava, another protester originally from Mexico City, noted that unlike similar protests last year most media here did not announce plans for this action, , minimizing the turnout. "But here we are the ones who want this to go ahead," he said.

'Migra' arrests 60 at Illinois packing plant

Continued from front page

employs about 100 people at the plant, where 2,200 workers slaughter 18,000 hogs per day. Cargill is the country's second largest beef and fourth largest pork producer.

The 60 are mostly from Mexico, with some from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Argentina. They are charged with immigration violations and "identity theft."

Two cleaning agency managers were also arrested, and charged with aggravated identity theft and with "aiding and abetting aggravated identity theft in connection with the alleged hiring of illegal immigrants."

Eleven of the workers grabbed by ICE agents were released "for humanitarian reasons": one needed kidney dialysis and the others have small children at home.

ICE has charged another 14 Beardstown plant workers with identity theft, but has not yet arrested them.

Beardstown, about 200 miles southwest of Chicago, is a river town of 6,000 people, about a third of whom are Spanish-speaking immigrants.

About 10 immigration rights advocates held a candlelight vigil the evening of April 4 outside a detention center in Broadview, Illinois, where some of the arrested workers were being held, reported Reuters.

Also that night, the Chicago-based Illinois Coalition for Immigrants and Refugee Rights sponsored a community meeting in Beardstown to update residents and explain where the arrested workers are being sent, and what the next steps for their defense will be.

WAND-TV in Springfield, Illinois, reported that three of the arrested workers spoke at a news conference the day after the raid. "They didn't let us go to the bathroom, in some cases they helped us drop our pants to go to the bathroom and in other cases they didn't let us," a female worker, who was not identified by name, said through a translator. "The only thing I ask . . . is

LETTERS

Emmett Till

I was glad to have attended a Newark Militant Labor Forum where *The Lynching of Emmett Till* was shown. The video was instrumental in the campaign to get the case reopened. But still, 52 years later, no indictments have been made. This might be an opening for a *Militant* article on the civil rights movement, what it accomplished and challenges ahead.

Jane Harris
South Orange, New Jersey

Truth and clarity

While reviewing a copy of the *Militant*, a health-care coworker remarked that it "sure exaggerates to make the system look bad." He was referring to the 50 bullet barrage the cops used to kill Sean Bell. I told him that one of the paper's strengths is its reliability. "We'll see about that!" he replied as he "googled" Sean Bell. Quite a look came over his face as he saw the reportage was right.

Truth and clarity—give us more!

Horace Kerr
Denver, Colorado

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Venezuela conference

Continued from front page

Guatemala, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Nearly half of the participants were in their 20s and 30s.

Most of the discussion took place in five workshops on themes such as "The Negative Effects of Neoliberal Globalization on Women," "Building International Solidarity Against Political Repression and Violence Against Women," and "The History of WIDF."

Many at the workshop on what is called "neoliberalism" spoke in general terms about the political situation in their countries. Some focused more directly on how capitalism's worldwide economic crisis affects the struggle for women's equality.

"Cutbacks in public health, education, and other social services reduce women's ability to participate in social life," said Luzbelia Marín, national coordinator of the Manuelita Sáenz Women's Movement (MoMuMaS). One of several national women's organizations in Venezuela, MoMuMaS works to increase women's involvement in government-sponsored social programs. It is named after the companion of Simón Bolívar, known as the liberator of Latin America. Sáenz herself fought in the struggle for Latin America's independence from Spanish colonial rule in the nineteenth century.

"One of the biggest problems we have with the community programs is that women cannot participate because they have to stay at home and watch the children," said Alba Fernández, a student at the Bolivarian University in Carabobo, in Valencia. "We go house to house, and many of the women we talk to want to study, want to participate in programs to learn art, culture, and history, but their responsibilities at home are too much and their husbands will not help with housework."

"Constitutional protections can guarantee women's equality by law," said Tania García from the Federation of Cuban Women. "But only social movements can enforce these laws and bring women's equality closer to being a reality."

Ongoing struggles in Argentina, Mexico, and Venezuela for women's right to choose abortion went largely unreflected in the discussion.

"Cuts in public health in capitalist countries are causing a re-criminalization of abortion where it is legal because abortion is not accessible to most women," Marín noted in her opening remarks, but no one addressed the question of a woman's right to choose from the floor.

Abortion remains illegal in Venezuela, as elsewhere throughout most of Latin America. The only exceptions are Barbados, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guyana.

In recent years women have fought for its decriminalization. The final declaration of the youth congress demands "universal access to abortion in all countries."

At the opening ceremony of the WIDF congress on April 9, WIDF president Marcia Campos, of the Federation of Brazilian Women and the October 8 Revolutionary Movement (MR8), said that nearly 1,000 delegates and guests representing 163 organizations in more than 80 countries had registered.

This is the first WIDF congress to take place in Latin America, and the largest since 1991. The last WIDF congress was held in Lebanon in 2003.

Campos reported that the largest delegations here are from Venezuela, Brazil, and Cuba. The Cuban delegation includes 40 women currently serving internationalist missions in Venezuela as doctors and other medical personnel, teachers, sports instructors, agricultural specialists, and in other capacities.

Delegates from 16 African countries are participating, including the Women's League of the African National Congress of South Africa, and the Association of Angolan Businesswomen. Women are here from 25 countries in Europe, 11 in the Middle East, and 6 in Asia.

Corrections

The article in the April 16 issue "The Cuban 5: Revolutionaries framed up by Washington" incorrectly stated that Ivette González, a daughter of René González, one of the Cuban Five incarcerated in the United States, has not seen her father since 2000. At the end of December 2006, Ivette and her sister Irma visited their father at the jail where he is being held in Marianna, Florida.

In the article "Toronto event promotes book on Chinese Cubans in the Cuban Revolution," also in the April 16 issue, the historian who spoke is Doug Hum, not Ham.